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SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT MAHAMA AT AU SUMMIT

REF: SECSTATE 07005

¶1. (SBU) Embassy has delivered a non-paper informing Vice President John Mahama of the issues reftel that Acting A/S Carter hopes to discuss at AU summit. Mahama will be departing Accra on January 30, and is expecting to meet with the acting A/S on February 1. His advance team, headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Chief Director Ambassador J.E. Aggrey, has already departed the country.

¶2. (SBU) President Mills yesterday announced the appointment of Alhaji Mohammed Mumuni as the new Foreign Minister. (Mumuni, Mills' running mate in his unsuccessful 2004 presidential campaign, must be vetted by Parliament before assuming office.) At this time, with the absence of the Chief Director, who is the highest ranking official in the Foreign Ministry, embassy has no substantive person with whom to discuss the issues raised reftel.

¶3. (SBU) On January 26, Ambassador spoke with Victor Gbeho, member of the transition team and former Foreign Minister, who said that the Mills administration was not planning to make any substantive changes in Ghana's foreign policy. Ghana has been a strong proponent of good governance in Africa and has played a positive role in both the AU and ECOWAS. In his inaugural address, President Mills promised that Ghana would "continue to be active in the African Union and in efforts to resolve conflicts on the continent. We will collaborate with the United Nations and other international and global institutions to make the world a better and safer place."

¶4. (SBU) Embassy believes that in his meeting with A/S Carter, Vice President Mahama will be sympathetic to the U.S. posture on all of the issues raised reftel. We don't, however, expect the Mills government to be much more vocal or forward leaning than the Kufuor administration was in dealing with some of the more intractable problems on the continent, especially in the initial months as it concentrates on domestic issues and the Ghanaian economy. One of embassy's goals, once President Mills has had a chance to settle into office and a new Foreign Minister is in place, will be to encourage Ghana to make its voice heard by taking a stronger stance in standing up against terrorism, human rights abuses, and the use of military force as a means to power in African countries.

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